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ABSTRACT

The problem of Hispanic-Anglo conflicts in nonverbal communication is approached in this paper from the perspective of a teacher of English and Spanish as second languages, using largely anecdotal and often autobiographical data. Specific cross-cultural differences between Hispanics (Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Cubans) and Anglos in the area of kinesics are documented: contrasts in moving (dancing and walking); in patterns of gazing and touching; in acceptable spatial distance; and in group bonding. McLuhan's distinction between the Western preference for left hemisphere (of the brain) activities and the Mediterranean and Third World preference for right hemisphere activities is built into the argument. Several nonverbal markers of social class that pose conflicts for Puerto Ricans when they move into the Anglo world are pinpointed: attire; education; voice; and hair. And finally, the integration of nonverbal communication into the author's ESL course and attempts to instill in students an awareness of their Puerto Rican culture are detailed. (RDN)

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HISPANIC-ANGLO CONFLICTS IN NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

by

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HISPANIC-ANGLO CONFLICTS IN NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION*

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My talk on the conflicts in nonverbal communication between Hispanics and Anglos will be given from the perspective of an English teacher—actually an ESL and SSL[1] teacher—who has become deeply interested in the culture concept in the past few years, partly because of what she has learned and discovered in the nonverbal area there; also, because she has the perspective of a person deeply committed to developing understanding and acceptance of self and others through cross-cultural and foreign language teaching. "Hispanic" will refer in my talk to the descendants of the Southern Moorish Spaniards, who started coming to the Caribbean area in 1492, mixing with the Taino and Carib Indians and with the Africans they brought later to till their lands, bringing forth in this fashion several new peoples: the Puerto Ricans, the Dominicans and the Cubans, among others.

How did I come into contact with the cross-cultural problems nonverbal communication creates among Anglos and us? It all started one Christmas eve in 1962—18 years ago—at a guitar concert at home, in Puerto Rico. I was sitting in the third row of the Concert Hall, and up in front in the first row was a friend of mine, the Dean of one of our Colleges at UPR, with a girl he should not have been with for he was going out with a dear friend of mine. As I looked at them, I proceeded to carry out this nonverbal dialogue with a friend sitting next to me.

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* This Conference was read at the Second Annual Conference of the Institute of Nonverbal Research at Teachers College, Columbia University, on March 21, 1980.

[1] ESL — English as a Second Language. SSL — Spanish as a Second Language.

THE DIALOGUE

	Nonverbal	English
I	-Wiggle nose Point with lips	Who's that over there?
Fr	-Wiggles nose	What did you say
I	-Point lips. Twist both hands at side, palms up	Who's she?
Fr	-Opens eyes wide. Drops edges of lips. Raises hands up to shoulder.	God! I don't know!

And then I became aware of what had just happened. Full communication, but of what kind? There was no single phoneme there, no morpheme or string of them, no intonation line, no juncture or stress; but I had communicated. Was this some sort of "underdeveloped" system of communication among us "underdeveloped" Puerto Ricans? (Remember the terms "culturally deprived" in vogue then...?) I had never "seen" anything like this up in the States, much less at Teachers College where I had just finished my doctoral work and requirements that year, 1962. And if Anglos did not communicate that way, and we Puerto Ricans did, then... possibly... because of transference... we... and my students... would transfer these non-Anglo gestures and meaningless "things" (to them)... when they... I... spoke English? I became most uneasy. Possibly something was missing from my ESL teaching at UPR. I had actually missed two thirds of what communication is all about, according to Birdwhistell, for language seems to be about just one third of culture. The rest is nonverbal communication.

It was in 1974, twelve years after that memorable Christmas concert, that I met Dr. Birdwhistell and Barbara Lynch. That was on a sabbatical year away from UPR.

From 1962 to 1974, I did not do much with this newly found area of research except to collect Puerto Rican gestures and talk about them to ESL teachers at home and here in the USA. People thought it was funny, this gesture thing, and they usually wound up asking me about sexual gestures. Then I talked about my Puerto Rican gestures—at a TESOL Convention in Denver, Colorado, in 1974. Life has not been

the same ever since. Because of that talk in Denver, I was asked to present the topic of nonverbal and ESL teaching at the 1975 TESOL Convention in Los Angeles, California, as a key-note speech there. Before I wrote it, I sat down to read; but I also moved around and observed people while staying in Philadelphia and New York City that sabbatical year. I want to share with you today some of the experiences I had then on the subject, and thus present some of the conflicts between Anglos and Hispanics in a contrasting way. All this as lived in my own flesh.

I will begin with **kinesics** by giving you a short quiz on Puerto Rican gestures. Please jot on a piece of paper the first word that comes to your mind as I say the following sentences with a gesture somewhere in them. Ready?

The Quizz

1. There were people like this (a lot of) at the party last night.
2. My uncle, besides being unpleasant, is also stingy.
3. The teacher is like this (angry) today.
4. That girl is very skinny.
5. The cake is delicious.
6. The food is all gone.
7. He has this much brains (little).
8. Those two are always fighting.
9. That fellow is a thief.
10. Peter! Come here.

How did you make out? Any perfect scores? 9? 8?, etc.

An incident now, also from the area of **kinesics**; this time, cross-cultural smiling.

The Anecdote

I entered a printer's shop in Philly to order some name-cards. The girl received me with "May I help you?" I answered: "Yes, please. I would like to order some cards with my..." I stopped. The girl had moved back ever so slightly, and there was fear on her face. I froze. Actually, I hadn't said the above as I did just now. I had answered her "May I help you?" with my broad, Puerto Rican "village" smile which women there turn on to other women. The girl took my order wrongly

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and the cards were printed wrongly.

I was incensed by the whole thing, for I had the uneasy feeling she had thought I was some kind of a nut. In *Kinesics in Context*, Birdwhistell states the following:

> If the communicational behavior of an individual is sufficiently unexpected and idiosyncratic as to be beyond the range of our previous experience, we may be unable to relate to him successfully. We can bear inappropriate behavior only if we can anticipate its inappropriateness. Undiagnosed unpredictability in others leaves us with doubts about ourselves. So, the definition of others as *insane* permits us to deal with them. (p. 15)

As I read this, I felt deeply worried, for that girl at the shop had actually thought I was a nut. Then I remembered some English expressions such as "He was smiling like an idiot."; "He was grinning like a fool." These have no equivalents in Spanish.

I related the incident at the printer's shop in Philly to a friend, an ESL teacher here in Brooklyn, and she said to me:

The Story

"Judy, the first time I entered my first kindergarten class, I realized they were Puerto Rican children. They greeted me with a big smile on their faces. I said to myself: 'God! Another bunch of morons!' "

Yes, morons! Probably those Puerto Rican children were scared to death, and had on the typical Puerto Rican mask of smiling away while paralyzed with fear inside. At another lecture I gave in Brooklyn, I was demonstrating the Puerto Rican gestures I had collected so far, and one teacher interrupted me to ask if the one I was just performing at that very moment was not a "sign of mental retardation". It was this one. (Shaking the hands up and down in front of the chest, as if they were wet, and you were shaking the water away). It means excitement, intense thrill. I was really concerned.

The following quote from *Moving Bodies* by La France & Mayo, describing certain kinds of people, also describes the dilemma and extreme difficulty of successful cross-cultural communication:

> For instance, they either look at another person too much or hardly at all. They remain very still or move about in agitated fashion. In addition, the timing of their nonverbal behavior is frequently off.

> They may do the right thing—smile or gesture—but at the altogether wrong time. They look or move when least expected or fail to respond when others would. (p. 52)

That could have been a description of me during that sabbatical year and, I am sure, way before that time. Then, as I read the paragraph again, in wonder, I realized it also described the way many of my quite sane American friends behave and have behaved when they come down to Puerto Rico to visit me and try to fit themselves into the Puerto Rican culture and its ways.

Actually, the description is not of foreigners, although it fits them to a "T". It's the description of psychiatric patients. In other words, foreigners will always look "sick" to natives of whatever culture.

This here is a study entitled "The Effect of Interview Language on the Evaluation of Psychopathology in Spanish-American Schizophrenic Patients" here in NYC. They found out that when a Colombian psychiatrist evaluated these "sick" patients using the Spanish language—no mention of nonverbal features—the patients were evaluated as less "sick" than when English speaking doctors evaluated them. I wondered if a Puerto Rican psychiatrist evaluating them would have sent them home as normally neurotic like the rest of us.

Condon and Lomax have also furnished me with additional cross-cultural contrasts on kinesics, synchrony and choreometrics, which also point to a few delicate conflicts of value and perception among the cultures being discussed. For example, it seems different cultures teach their members to move their body trunks differently. Nordics seem to carry their trunks as if they were made up of one piece. This I have also observed among Northern Spaniards. The Nordic Anglo trunk looks and moves as if it were one unit. The Caribbean peoples were dominated by Mediterranean peoples, also peoples of the sea, fishing peoples. Apparently, this type of society, as opposed to agricultural mountain societies, has developed a way of carrying human trunks as if they were made up of separable parts. "That's me!", I said to myself. But the next statement from Lomax was a high point in my newly acquired cultural awareness. "Dancing follows from the way people walk." Nordic Anglos cannot dance the Dominican *merengue* nor the Cuban *rumba*, nor the Puerto Rican *bomba*, nor the Spanish *flamenco* from Southern Spain, not because they are mentally retarded or culturally deprived, but simply because they walk differently. I'll finish my section on cross-cultural contrasts in moving with a convent anecdote.

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A Convent Anecdote

I first came up to the States as an adolescent to begin my studies toward a B.A. at a Catholic college for girls in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Every year a small group of Puerto Rican young women came up on scholarships granted by the Sisters stationed in Puerto Rico. The Dean of the College would take the small group under her wing during the first week of school and orient us on many things. One of the exercises was in chapel. We would line up in the center aisle, and she'd go to the choir loft to shout these instructions at us:

"Stand up straight, shoulder up, tummies in, now... walk... but don't wiggle those hips!" Actually, we could not move. What Sister McSweeney was telling us was that our walk was slightly indecent for that sacred place. This is still happening to Hispanic novices in many American convents. No wonder they can't... the word is... "persevere"! How can they "persevere" with a broken heart, mind and will where the content is mostly determined by culture? This tragic dilemma of cross-cultural communication and understanding is one still hardly recognized by convents, seminaries, universities, institutes... in fact, by practically no one in the field of education.

Gazing and touching offered additional contrasts for me that incredible year I spent in Philadelphia and have continued to do so to this day. As I walked through the streets, I realized I was getting very angry stares back from women. Then, suddenly, I realized I was smiling at them as they came towards me on the streets and as I passed them. I would look at them straight in the eye, smile, bow my head and pass on; in return, I was getting surprised, frightened and angry looks. Then, I thought of my hometown in Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, and I could see myself having done just that all my life, and getting an exact replica of my behavior in return. Apparently, in our context, that is the salutation among women of similar age, whether they know each other or not. I have also seen this at the University of Puerto Rico. In San Juan, the capital, I have seen it much less. Then, another realization hit me. The men in Philadelphia were not looking at me... at all... so it seemed to me! I then remembered the stares I had always got, and still get at home, and the *piropos*... flowery, poetic verbal comments said to me and my girl friends as we passed the tight circles of men or university fellows at the street corners in my hometown. Nothing like this was happening to me in Philadelphia and, guess what?, I missed it. Actually, I was starting to feel very lonely, for the absence of so many

familiar nonverbal cues had started a "culture shock" in me. *Piropos* are disappearing in Puerto Rico, not because the men are changing that much, but because the car is used more and one walks much less now. But the stares are still there. Here it is not so. In fact, they are highly insulting here, although quite accepted there.

In trying to put into practice some of Birdwhistell's comments regarding Anglo gazing here in the USA (I'm and ESL teacher, so I believe in pattern practice), I tried to look straight into the eyes of my Anglo friends as I talked and listened to them, both men and women. In Puerto Rico, we also usually look straight at the person we are listening to, but not as directly. However, when it is our turn to talk, we swing our heads away from side to side. Of course, there's a pattern... to be filmed some day, I hope! I call this "oscillating-fan" gazing; and yours, "tunnel" gazing. When I tried to steady my head while talking, I got cramps on my neck muscles and I also felt upset at the immobile, unsmiling faces looking (attentively and most courteously from an Anglo point of view) at me. You know how I interpreted them? As angry, judgmental, scolding faces. And I felt uncomfortable; besides, my English did not come through as neatly. One day, while talking and listening to an Anglo friend here at Teachers College I caught myself thinking, "Why are you looking at me like that, you dirty old thing?" He wasn't really. It was the contrasting nonverbal gazing pattern in the two cultures which gave rise in me to feelings toward my Anglo friend that would be adequate in Puerto Rico but not here. The steady gaze of a man on a girl or woman as he talks to her is part of the courtship ritual in Puerto Rico. I then had the full, complete realization that these nonverbal activities gave rise to much more that just physical or biological reactions: they produce, they touch off, automatically, uncontrollably, out-of-awareness powerful feelings, probably more forcefully and directly than words can produce. This is the Achilles heel in cross-cultural communication: dealing with one's culturally learned feelings which are usually neither applicable nor adequate to new-cross-cultural situations. But, either your deal with your feelings, and the behavior they generate, as rationally as possible and at the level of awareness, or you just don't communicate, or communicate very strange things. As a teacher, this has really posed problems that keep me going around in circles, methodologically speaking. How am I going to teach my students to speak (that's incredibly difficult), gazing directly, and on top of that, work at their feelings as well? Rough, but I have to teach them. Otherwise, they are

going to be evaluated as either indifferent, shifty, or underhanded while speaking in English with our gazing patterns, and they won't communicate! How am I to teach our gazing patterns to some of my Anglo students who are learning SSL, so they will not be called dirty old men, or easy, facile American women? Actually, my main fields of training—phonetics, grammar and conversation—have helped me out tremendously. Approximations are perfectly O.K. in foreign language and culture learning. Find out what the real, real troublesome areas are—there are not too many—and work at them. For example, in phonetics, it's not the vowel system that is so, so crucial for Spanish speakers in learning to speak English, but the final consonant clusters of the English language. Although I do teach the English vowel system to my students quite well, I really work slowly and well at developing good approximations in their oral production of English consonant clusters in final syllable position.

Back to my experiences. I also realized I was having trouble with the Anglo touching patterns as well; and my friends were having trouble with mine. My American friends of my own sex stepped back as soon as my hands went out to touch them, as I do at home with my friends there. "Hi, Judy!" And they put both hands in front of them, to keep me at a distance comfortable to them. My space was also at odds with theirs. They would start bending back as I talked to them. But then, I started bending back with some of my American men friends and acquaintances in the States. Why were they touching me? I was angry. Touching patterns as well as those of space seem to be in complete reversal in the two cultures. People of the same sex and age touch a lot, and stand quite close together in Puerto Rico. This is different from the Anglo pattern when the two are compared and measured. But people of the opposite sex and age in Puerto Rico do not touch at all, and they stand farther apart than the Anglos do. However, I'm just starting to "see" the following: when men and women friends are together in Puerto Rico, talking and joking, it's women who touch men on their backs, chests, or stomachs, with their hands, with a very brief touch, like a tap. But the men never reciprocate. When I realized men can touch you in the Anglo culture, and it means friendship, tenderness and affection, I told myself: "Judy, switch cultural channels and enjoy it, for you don't have that at home."

All of the above has made me apply the following rule of thumb in my observations of Puerto Rican and Anglo culture: what is permissible and acceptable in one, Anglo or Puerto Rican, is practically always

not so in the other.

This dramatic split situation shows up clearly in what Hall calls **monochronism** *vs.* **polychronism.** Monochronic cultures do one thing at a time. They seem to be linear, sequential, clock-time oriented, work-oriented, (conference oriented), efficient, silent. They are the cultures that according to Hall made the Industrial Revolution possible, for the assembly line concept probably could not have been "invented" except by them. Polychronic cultures, however, do many things at the same time, seem to order things circularly, are repetitive in speech, noisy, and time is not of the essence. Which is which? Nordics are monochronic; Puerto Ricans are polychronic. In his book *Beyond Culture*, in describing how relationships are established in Hispanic, Arabic and Asiatic countries where polychronism seems to be prevalent, Hall mentions the word **bonding** which is used in these cultures to bind together the very important groups, taking the form of constant talking, gossiping, playing of music, radios: in short, through noise. All this happens in peer groups. I met a principal from Massachussetts two years ago who told me how the Puerto Rican children in his school would rather not eat than go to the cafeteria alone as was the ruling there. If you break up a Puerto Rican *mancha* (stain), you are breaking up more than an arrangement of bodies. You're breaking up a very important "buddy" system. Actually, if you do not belong to a certain *mancha* at home, you are indeed treated as a shadow by the members of said *mancha*. You are in fact not seen. There are forms of getting into a *mancha*, however, which I hope to be able to specify some day.

And then I read Marshall McLuhan's 1978 article on the hemispheres of the brain, "The Hemisphere's and the Media." There he comments on a chart included by R.J. Trotter in his article "The Other Hemisphere", which appeared in *Science News* in 1976.

Both writers—and many others with them—seem to be saying that, apparently, the Western world has a preference for Left Hemisphere activities (See Appendix I on page 199). All of the Northern European countries evidence this preference through their social institutions: their school systems, their industrial systems, their international relationships, the lay-out of the cities. McLuhan calls this **The Great Brain Robbery**, for he believes Western European societies have made marginal the Right Hemisphere activities in their living, and have harmed their members severely by doing so. It seems Mediterranean, African, Asiatic, and Caribbean peoples have a preference for Right

Hemisphere activities (See Appendix I). Both literate as well as oral peoples are involved here, but the preference still remains in spite of literacy. Like McLuhan, I also believe that, besides, many of the so-called right-hemisphere societies do incredible harm to their members by overstressing uncontrolled emotionalism and unexamined spirituality to the detriment of analytical thinking.

I am still trying to organize my thoughts in good left hemisphere fashion regarding this incredible bit of information about the brain. While doing it, I am sharing the information with some of my colleagues at the School of Education at UPR. If this is even minimally true, then we in Puerto Rico must adjust the Nordic-Germanic educational system that came to us with the Americans in 1898 and adapt it to our cultural and brain preference styles; or else, our students will continue to feel thoroughly confused, frustrated, and totally bored with much of our teaching. I am already experimenting in making my ESL classroom more polychronic, with peer teaching in small groups *(la mancha)*; making it more emotional, joyful, through singing and dramatics; repetitive, but not competitive, particularly in testing. I am also making all of my teaching extremely rational, analytical and sequential. The feedback I have been getting from my students these past two years is that they are finally learning and liking Engish, because, guess what?, it's fun!

Our Puerto Rican society, like all the others, has also its power and status nonverbal cues. I haven't done much observing of them, really, because I am trying to find out more about how my society is structured in order to better understand the meanings of the nonverbal cues. Hall says it is a monumental task to understand just one's own culture. So, bear with me. I'm trying to understand not one but two: yours and mine.

How is our society organized? Forty years ago, a certain man many of you know, Don Luis Muñoz Marín, initiated the industrialization of the agricultural island of Puerto Rico. I was an adolescent then, 1940, and I have lived in two very different worlds. But contemporary Puerto Rico still seems to me very much like the old one, in spite of the tremendous changes that have taken place on the island in such a short period of 40 years. Industrializing an agricultural country usually takes much longer. But I have the impression nonverbal cues of power and status seem not to have budged much. I still "see" and "hear" a class oriented society in Puerto Rico. There is still an upper class and a lower class, particularly in the towns away from the Capital, San Juan,

and there are 74 of them. There is an emerging middle class, of course, which I am afraid still considers itself lower and inferior.

Who make up these two classes, *la alta y la baja*, expressions that are still quite common in everyday conversation at home? The upper class was and is made up of the descendants of the white Spanish landed gentry, the Catholic priesthood (there were descendants here, too), the intellectual elite: the poets, writers, newspaper owners, who also held posts in government. In my youth, you had to be a poet to be the mayor of a town. Up in the hills, in the *campo*, there were a few not too rich Spanish landowners—*los pequeños terratenientes*—who constituted a minor aristocracy, the *jíbaro one*, the peasants of story, fantasy, odes, musicality, gentleness, honor and cunning.

The *clase baja* was and is made up of the descendants of the enslaved Indians and Africans brought to Puerto Rico very soon after the *conquista* and who mixed with their owners. Later on, this class also included the dispossessed "peons", the white farmhands who became practically slaves when the paternalistic *hacienda* gave way to the impersonal sugar-cane industry. Each group and sub-group, of course, has its own cues for status and power, and they are being studied. I'll just mention a few class markers which are non-verbal, and which do pose conflicts for Puerto Ricans when they move into the Anglo world:

1. Attire — There is an obsession for style in dressing and for care of the body in the upper class. It is also accepted by the lower as a sign of finesse and of good mental health.

2. Education — If you're upper, you should have at least a University education. You cannot be a *burro* with money. I have heard this in the mouths of my students. Money is important, and now it is even more so; but you should be able to speak about other things beside money, or else. ...There is a conflict here with the Anglo belief that money is a value in itself.

3. Voice — Upper class women must speak low, slow and non-assertively, and never like the screechy, boisterous *jíbara* who is so uneducated! Then the Cuban upper class woman came to Puerto Rico, and she talks loud and is assertive. We have had problems there, as well as with some Anglo-American women.

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4. Hair — Upper class hair is straight. There are at least 8 negative words in Puerto Rican Spanish for my hair. When color "fails" in placing you on the scale, hair will be used.

Puerto Rico is also a *macho* culture. There are many homes where the wives never look directly into their husbands' eyes as they do in Arabian countries (Iran). And, of course, women should not leave the "compound"—I call it the "harem"—alone at night. A home to me was very much a woman's world, and the men only came to eat and sleep. It is changing... but slowly, for too much is involved here... such things as **respeto, dignidad,** not just for the man, but also for the woman. A male sociologist at the University of Puerto Rico once said to me: "You know women can get anything from us, Judy. You're the real bosses!" I'm the only woman member of the Board of Trustees of the second largest university in Puerto Rico, a private one, Inter American University: 21 men and myself. I am their *novia* (sweetheart), but when I chair one of the Committees, their compliment usually is *¡Dirigiste la reunión como un macho!* I take it well, because of what I am going to say next.

Most of my undergraduate students—I have a hundred of them—are young girls, lovely and brilliant Puerto Rican young women from the lower and middle classes (I have one young man this year). (In my graduate class, I have 5 men and 10 women, all teachers). I relate to them as an ESL teacher and also as a Puerto Rican woman who has found much food for thought lately through her cross-cultural studies and observations of nonverbal communication. My course content is also trying to reflect my latest experiences and interests: Unit I—Transactional Analysis and the ESL classroom; Unit II—On speaking and communicating in a foreign tongue and culture; Unit III—Cross-cultural understanding and transcending; Unit IV — Testing; Unit V — Curriculum, etc. I never get to these last two.

In other words, the key point in my teaching now is to alert my students to one thing regarding themselves and their culture; their Puerto Rican culture. And it is this. They (both men and women) are of much more worth than their own particular culture. Should any aspect of that culture diminish their worth as human beings, they must try to modify it, through their external behavior and/or the modification of their feelings. In 1979 I got confirmation of my slowly developing belief regarding this point from Pope John Paul II at Christmas

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time. In his Christmas message he said the following: "Christmas is the feast of man, (and woman, of course). Man celebrates the fact that God came down to remind him, that he, man and woman, is one, unique, and non-repeatable." If we are so, and I believe this in the very depth of my own unique existence as a non-repeatable being, then I am more, much more than my magnificent culture, which is also such a very important part of me. And so is every one of you here, whether Anglo, Black or Hispanic. It is whith this understanding and conviction that we can talk and interrelate, for here we find the common ground that gives culture as a reality its immense worth and dignity, with all its linguistic, nonverbal and cultural differences.

I want to share with you a poem (See Appendix III, page 202) by our Julia de Burgos, on the same theme: "I am much more than the 'parts'."

Since I am right hemisphere dominant by cultural preference, I will end my talk in very emotional and spiritual terms. Nonverbal and cross-cultural research are extremely important, and they should continue to be as demanding and exact as possible. We need more thorough cross-cultural studies, for there are too few at present. But there is much more to this kind of research. This very same research points unceasingly to one thing: my involvement as a researcher, but one committed to self-improvement and social change. My work has always pointed to one task: that of resolving within myself with patience and reverence all the negative cultural elements, all the nonproductive attitudes, feelings and behaviors that make me less human, although still operating in me because of my culture; things which do not allow me to live a full and joyful human life, because they upset the harmony within myself and, consequently, the harmony with others. This is St. Paul's "old man", *el hombre viejo*. However, I have also come to understand fully as I try to change, ever so slowly—and quite painfully at times—and try to help others to change, that cultures are not psychiatric wards to be abandoned after treatment, nor clogged pipes to be flushed out mercilessly. Cultures—mine and yours—are awesome, magnificent and mysterious products of man, who is the real source of that awesomeness, magnificence and mystery in them. We are awesome; we are magnificent; we are the mystery. That's why we have to go gingerly and reverently about changing things, for I intuitively feel that in destroying anything built by man, by us, we run the risk of also destroying ourselves or much that is ourselves. History is full of such "liberating" destructions.

The unresolved question is how to go about it, a question I want to be devoted to answering the rest of my life. Some have chosen to change institutions. Good! I have chosen to work with the individual person. Me first. But change we must!

At the same time I realize the difficulty of the task, but my faith increases day by day in the certainty that I am not alone in this effort. I feel God's presence and His unfaltering support in all my weak attempts. He has also shown me beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is hope for such dignity, freedom and harmony in this mad but incredibly beautiful world of ours.

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